

# LEARNING FROM THE LAKE

FROM THE GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

APRIL 2011

The Education Newsletter is a new monthly resource for families, educators, and naturalists alike! Every month, this newsletter will provide activities for families to do at home; phenology for the current month to keep you updated on migration patterns and happenings in nature; interesting facts relevant to the time of year; astronomical events; and family-friendly events happening around the Duluth area.

Watch for Education Newsletters each month! For inquiries on FREE subscriptions, contact Lindsay Brandt via email [lbrandt@glaquarium.org](mailto:lbrandt@glaquarium.org) or phone (218) 740-2027.

## Family Activity—Recycled Watering Can

Celebrate Earth Day with this green project! This craft not only helps keep milk jugs out of the landfill, but provides an attractive, inexpensive, and useful way of watering your plants.

### What you need:

- \* Milk jug
- \* Plastic funnel
- \* Washable, fine-point marker
- \* Scissors
- \* Paper towels
- \* White duct tape
- \* Decorating items



Remove labels, wash, and dry milk jug. Place the funnel in desired spout position, opposite the handle. Trace around the funnel with the washable, fine-point marker. Cut a circle about 1/4 inch inside the circle outline, wipe off outline. Compress funnel slightly and pop the wide side into the container, use strips of white duct tape to hold in place. Decorate as desired.

## Phenology—April 2011 *by Minnesota Weatherguide*

### **First and Second Weeks**

- \* Migrant birds returning include tundra swans, ospreys, great egrets, and northern flickers.
- \* Red maple and crabapple trees begin to bloom.
- \* Rhubarb and irises begin to appear.
- \* Wood and chorus frogs begin vocalizing.

### **Third and Fourth Weeks**

- \* Eastern bluebirds, wood ducks, and mallards are nesting.
- \* Woodland flowers cover forest floors.
- \* Brown thrashers, barn swallows, blackbirds, green herons and white-throated sparrows return.
- \* Backyard trees bloom.
- \* Farmers prep soil for planting season.

## Did you know?!

- \* The Great Lakes hold over 20 percent of the world's supply of surface freshwater, and 95 percent of North America's.
- \* 850 billion gallons of water are pumped out of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway each day.
- \* If the rate of overuse and abuse of this freshwater supply continues, scientists expect the Great Lakes to be "bone dry" within 80 years.



### **Get Outside on Earth Day!**

This year, April 22nd marks the 41st anniversary of a global environmental effort. This effort encourages people from all walks of life to become environmentally aware and aid in the sustainability of Earth.

Here is how you can participate:

- \* Check out local events.
- \* Reduce, reuse, recycle.
- \* Organize a group of your family and friends to clean up a local beach or stream.
- \* Plant a tree.
- \* Go for a hike.
- \* Compost your food waste.



# April Astronomy

April is Global Astronomy Month! Saturn will make its appearance on several occasions as will other exciting events. Be sure to mark your calendar for the following:

April 4—Saturn, the 6th and second largest planet in our solar system, is easily visible in the night sky. Saturn is best known for its presence of rings. Keep an eye out for the *Seeliger Effect*, a brief time in which Saturn's rings are at their brightest.



April 13—Saturn's moon, Dione, can be seen passing across the planets' southern pole between 3:00am and 4:00am.

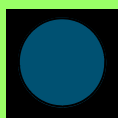
April 16—Saturn will appear to be the brightest "star" in the night sky, just above the moon.

April 22—April's Lyrids Meteor Shower reaches its peak this evening. Unfortunately, the amount of light the moon will give off could block a majority of visible meteors.

April 30—Five planets will be visible in the night sky! Just before sunrise, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Uranus can be seen in the same part of the sky—near the waning crescent moon, just above the eastern horizon.

Moon Phases—What are the phases of the moon? What do the terms waning and waxing mean?

Waning simply means the moon appears to get smaller in size (as it progresses to the new moon phase). When the moon is progressing towards a full moon and appears to grow larger, it is in the waxing phase.



New Moon



Waxing Crescent



1st Quarter



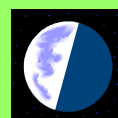
Waxing Gibbous



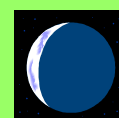
Full Moon



Waning Gibbous



3rd Quarter




Waning Crescent

## April Family Events

- April 9: Earth Fest in Mountain Iron, MN
- April 14-30: Let's GO! (Get Outside) events at Crex Meadows Wildlife Education & Visitor Center in Grantsburg, WI
- April 15-16: Mountain Meltdown at Lutsen
- April 22: Earth Day
- April 23: Easter EGG-stravaganza at LS Zoo
- April 25-26: Empty Bowl Fundraiser at The Depot
- April 30: Respect you Mother Earthday Festival in Lief Erikson Park
- April 30: Family Earth Day and Arbor Day Celebration at Wargo Nature Center in Lino Lakes

## APRIL 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## Educational Programming and Events at Great Lakes Aquarium

**Whirligigs Preschool Program:** this is exciting drop-off program is for children ages 3-5. Every Tuesday and Wednesday from March 22nd—April 27th, preschoolers learn more about nature! This season, preschoolers will be learning about boats and bridges, water, frogs, the importance of ladybugs, Earth Day, and rainbows. Pre-registration is REQUIRED. Contact Lindsay Brandt for more information or to register: (218) 740-2027 or lbrandt@glaquarium.org.

**Polliwogs Kindergarten Program:** embark on a two-hour journey aboard the USS GLA and explore life along the St. Louis River! Explore ways that animals and plants change in the springtime, discover how baby animals grow up and get a closer look at the wildlife in our backyard. This program will be held April 21st. Pre-registration is REQUIRED. Contact Lindsay Brandt for more information or to register: (218) 740-2027 or lbrandt@glaquarium.org.

**Are You Thirsty?** Puppets are a great way to tell a story. Explore the history of puppet making and enjoy the performance, "Are You Thirsty?" with In the Heart of the Beast and Puppet and Mask Theater. Performance and puppet workshops FREE on April 22nd and 23rd.